

**OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE
MEDIA BRIEFING NOTE
FEBRUARY 16, 2022**

TO: Hon. Anita Anand, Minister of National Defence
FROM: Daniel Minden, Press Secretary
CC: Sabrina Kim, Director of Communications and Issues Management
SUBJECT: Scrums and Interviews at NATO Defence Ministers Meeting

THREE POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- 1. At this pivotal time for the security of Europe and the world, I am glad to be here at NATO headquarters for my first Defence Ministers Meeting as Canada's Minister of National Defence. NATO is a cornerstone of Canada's foreign and defence policy, and our commitment to the alliance is unwavering.**
- 2. We are deeply concerned by Russia's unwarranted aggression in and around Ukraine. Canada's support for Ukraine's sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity is firm. Canada and our NATO allies call on Russia to de-escalate, or it will face severe, coordinated economic sanctions. I look forward to discussing our alliance's coordinated approach with my counterparts over the next few days.**
- 3. This week, we announced two important measures to further support Ukraine. Following discussions with our Ukrainian partners, including during my recent trip to Kyiv, our government has authorized the provision of lethal weapons to further assist Ukraine's security forces. We will also provide Ukraine with an additional loan of up to \$500 million to support the country's economic resilience. President Zelensky and Minister Reznikov have expressed their deep gratitude to Canada for this support.**

QUICK FACTS:

LETHAL WEAPONS

- In response to the ask from Minister Reznikov, we have authorized the provision of lethal weapons to Ukraine and will move as quickly as possible to provide them.
- These weapons could include rifles, machine guns, and related equipment.
- This support comes in addition to our non-lethal aid ^{s.38} financial support, and training mission, which has trained over 33,000 members of Ukraine's security forces.

EVACUATION OF OPERATION UNIFIER PERSONNEL

- The security of our Canadian Armed Forces personnel is my top priority.
- As a result of Russia's unwarranted aggression against Ukraine, the Canadian Armed Forces are temporarily relocating components of Joint Task Force – Ukraine (JTF-U) to elsewhere in Europe.
- This temporary repositioning of JTF-U personnel is to assure the security of our troops, and it does not signal the end of our training mission.
- For operational security reasons, we will not provide further details on numbers, locations, or future intentions.
- We remain committed to supporting the people, and Security Forces, of Ukraine.

LOAN OF UP TO \$500 MILLION

- Deputy Prime Minister Freeland announced that Canada will offer a loan of up to \$500 million to the Government of Ukraine through the *Bretton Woods and Related Agreements Act*, to support the country's economic resilience in face of Russian military aggression.
- This complements the \$120 million loan offer announced by Canada on January 21, and the \$50 million in humanitarian aid announced on January 26.

PREVIOUS FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

- Since 2014, Canada has invested \$245 million to support Ukraine's constitutional, judicial and security reforms.
- On January 21, Minister Sajjan announced that Canada has offered a loan of up to \$120 million to the Government of Ukraine.
- On January 26, Canada announced \$50 million for development and humanitarian assistance, as well as additional support for the Peace and Stabilization Operations Program to support Ukraine's security sector reforms and improve the capacity of its security sector institutions.
- This money will support the country's economic resilience and governance reforms in the face of unwarranted Russian aggression.

OPERATION UNIFIER

- In 2015, Canada launched Operation UNIFIER in response to requests from the Government of Ukraine, to help Ukraine remain sovereign, secure, and stable.
- It has assisted with security force training, building capability and capacity. Two weeks ago in Ukraine, I met with Operation UNIFIER leadership and saw first-hand the results of this incredible work.
- Canada has trained over 33,000 Security Forces of Ukraine (SFU), and almost 2,000 members of the National Guard of Ukraine (NGU).
- Canadian troops have conducted more than 600 courses on a range of tactical and advanced military skills.
- Courses include unit and brigade level tactical training, combat engineer training such as improvised explosive device disposal and explosive ordnance disposal; sniping; reconnaissance; military policing; development of a non-commissioned officer corps; and medical training.
- In addition, civilian and military personnel from the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces have been supporting key elements of Ukraine's defence reform process, such as democratic accountability and civilian oversight of defence and security institutions.
- Operation UNIFIER harmonizes its efforts with other nations through a Multinational Joint Commission. This commission includes Canada, Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- The Canadian Armed Forces will also work with s.38 s.38 s.38 to help Ukraine defend itself against a range of threats.

NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT

- Over the past years, Canada has provided s.38 s.38 a mobile field hospital, explosive disposal equipment, medical kits used for military field operations, and night vision goggles.

- On February 3, Canada sent a flight containing body armour and load carriage kits, binoculars, laser rangefinders, metal detectors, and spotting scopes, to Ukraine.

s.38

ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIA

- Canada has imposed sanctions on more than 440 individuals and entities, many in coordination with our allies, since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014.
 - Canada has sanctioned 120 individuals and 81 entities related to Russia's violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.
 - Canada has sanctioned 202 individuals and 42 entities related to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the ongoing Russian occupation in parts of eastern Ukraine.
- In the face of this test, NATO allies are united in affirming that further military incursion into Ukraine will have serious consequences, including coordinated sanctions.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(A) UKRAINE

1. **Do you believe that an invasion is imminent, as your British counterpart does? Does your assessment diverge from Ukraine's assessment?**
 - We are deeply concerned by the ongoing Russian aggression in and around Ukraine, and in particular, its military buildup. Ukraine's security is Europe's security and the world's security. I conveyed this message during my trip to Ukraine two weeks ago.
 - Canada's support for Ukraine's sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity is steadfast and unwavering, and we will continue to stand by Ukraine.
 - Russia must de-escalate, show transparency in its military activities and engage in meaningful dialogue.
 - Any military incursion into Ukraine will have serious consequences, including coordinated sanctions.
 - The G7 has been very clear in declaring that Russia should be in no doubt that further military aggression against Ukraine would have massive consequences and severe cost.
 - We will continue to work with our allies to coordinate our responses to deter aggression.
2. **Did Canada wait too long to send lethal aid to Ukraine? Allies did this weeks ago.**
 - Since 2015, our government has provided Ukraine with meaningful and comprehensive support.
 - As NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg recently said, "Canada is one of the lead countries in NATO when it comes to providing support for Ukraine," and that "there are not many other countries at the equal level of efforts, doing as much as Canada."

- President Zelensky and Minister Reznikov have expressed sincere thanks to Canada for our support.
 - We have adapted our supports as the situation evolves, and we've announced the authorization of lethal aid, which will arrive as quickly as possible.
- 3. Has our lethal aid left Canada? When will it arrive? Will it arrive too late?**
- I will not share precise details for operational security reasons, but I assure you that it will arrive as quickly as possible.
- 4. Do you believe that a diplomatic solution is possible?**
- We are all hoping for a diplomatic solution, and the ball is in Russia's court.
 - The diplomatic process offers Russia two options: they can choose meaningful dialogue, or severe consequences.
 - We continue to call on Russia to de-escalate and engage in meaningful dialogue.
 - We will continue to work with our NATO allies to coordinate our responses to deter aggression.
 - Any incursion by the Russian military will incur serious consequences, including coordinated sanctions.
- 5. We have seen American, British, French and German ministers crisscrossing Europe in what looks like a last-ditch diplomatic effort. Is Canada involved in these efforts at all?**
- The Prime Minister, Minister Joly, and I are deeply engaged with our counterparts.
 - On Friday, I spoke with U.S. Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin, and I am in frequent contact with my Ukrainian counterpart, Minister Reznikov, whom I met in Kyiv two weeks ago.
 - On Friday, the Prime Minister spoke with President Biden, and the leaders of the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Romania, the European Commission, the European Council, and NATO, to discuss Russia's military buildup.
 - On the weekend, the Prime Minister spoke with European Council President Charles Michel, Ukrainian President Zelensky, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, and Polish President Andrej Duda.
 - We will continue to remain in close contact with our NATO allies and Ukrainian partners to monitor this evolving situation.
- 6. Why did Canada withdraw its troops from Ukraine? Are there any left?**
- Op UNIFIER is a training and capacity building mission to support the Ukrainian people.
 - The safety and security of Canadian Armed Forces members is my top priority, and we will always work to keep them safe.
 - As a result of Russia's unwarranted aggression against Ukraine, Canadian Armed Forces are temporarily relocating components of Joint Task Force – Ukraine (JTF-U) to elsewhere in Europe.
 - This temporary repositioning of JTF-U personnel is to assure the security of our troops, and it does not signal the end of our training mission.
 - We remain committed to supporting the people, and Security Forces, of Ukraine
 - *If pressed on whether the additional 60 trainers ever arrived, or on remaining Canadian troops in Ukraine:* For operational security reasons, we will provide further details on numbers, locations, or future intentions.

7. Is there any future for Operation UNIFIER? Is this “relocation” really temporary?

- This is indeed a temporary relocation of our troops to elsewhere in Europe, and this does not signal the end of our mission in support of Ukraine.

8. What else is Canada doing in Europe to deter Russian aggression?

- s.38 Canada has been active on land, air, and sea to promote stability and security in Central and Eastern Europe. Two weeks ago, I visited Camp Adazi in Latvia and met with our troops deployed there.
- Canada is leading the multi-national Enhanced Forward Presence Battle Group in Latvia and has participated in the NATO enhanced Air Policing mission in Romania on a rotational basis.
- Canada also recently handed over command of the NATO Standing Maritime Group 1 to our Dutch allies, and we constantly have a frigate deployed to the region under a NATO flag – currently HMCS Montreal.
- Canada will consistently support NATO operations to deter against any aggressive actions in the region.
- Canada will continue to work with our partners and allies to uphold peace, security, and the rules-based international order.

9. This weekend, the United States announced an additional 3,000 troops to be deployed to Poland. Is Canada considering boosting its presence on NATO’s eastern flank?

- Two weeks ago, in Latvia, I met with Canadian Armed Forces members serving on s.38 in support of NATO assurance and deterrence measures.
- At any time, there can be up to 915 CAF members deployed on s.38 making it Canada’s largest current international military operation.
- We are considering options to bolster our presence in Eastern Europe.

10. Compared to our NATO allies, has Canada done enough to support Ukraine?

- During my conversation with Defence Minister Reznikov, the Minister thanked Canada for our significant contributions to Ukraine’s security. In fact, Operation UNIFIER has trained approximately 33,000 members of Ukraine’s security forces, including almost 2,000 members of Ukraine’s national guard.
- President Zelensky and Minister Reznikov have expressed sincere thanks to Canada for this announcement.
- NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg also remarked that, “Canada is one of the lead countries in NATO when it comes to providing support for Ukraine,” and that “there are not many other countries at the equal level of efforts, doing as much as Canada.”
- Our aid has been developed through close collaboration with our partners and allies. Military training and capacity building are Canadian military strengths, and we have been uniquely positioned to provide this important support to our Ukrainian partners.
- We’ve announced further aid to support Ukraine’s sovereignty and security, including financial assistance and the provision of lethal weapons.
- Canada’s support for Ukraine’s sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity is steadfast and unwavering, and we will continue to stand by Ukraine.

11. What sanctions plan is in place in case Russia does invade? The Russian Ambassador says no one cares... would sanctions change Russia's behaviour?

- Canada is steadfast in our support of Ukraine's sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence.
- Canada has imposed sanctions on more than 440 individuals and entities, many in coordination with our allies, since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014.
 - Canada has sanctioned 120 individuals and 81 entities related to Russia's violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.
 - Canada has sanctioned 202 individuals and 42 entities related to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the ongoing Russian occupation in parts of eastern Ukraine.
 - Additionally, Canada has frozen the assets of 18 individuals to facilitate the recovery of misappropriated and embezzled Ukrainian property and to ensure accountability, rule of law, and a transition to democracy in Ukraine under the Freezing Assets of Corrupt Foreign Officials (Ukraine) Regulations.
- We will continue to work with our allies to coordinate our responses to deter further Russian aggression.
- Any further military incursion into Ukraine will have serious consequences, including coordinated sanctions.

12. Does Canada support NATO membership for Ukraine?

- Canada fully supports NATO's Open Door Policy, and welcomes Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations.
- Ukraine's current Enhanced Opportunities Partner (EOP) status is an important recognition by NATO of the progress that Ukraine has made, and of Ukraine's significant and valued contributions to NATO operations and exercises.
- Canada remains unwavering in its support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, and the people of Ukraine.
- Since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, Canada has imposed sanctions on more than 440 individuals and entities, many in coordination with allies.
- Any military incursion into Ukraine will have serious consequences, including coordinated sanctions.

13. Are you confident that lethal arms won't end up in the wrong hands?

- Since 2015, Canada has developed excellent integration with the Security Forces of Ukraine. We have trained well over 33,000 members of the SFU and over 2,000 members of Ukraine's national guard.
- The professional training that Canada has provided will assist these forces in the use of these weapons.
- *If pressed on the Azov Battallion:* We strongly oppose all forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, intolerance and extremism. We are not – nor will we - be providing support to Azov and affiliated entities. We continue to vehemently oppose any and all racist, discriminatory and hateful views and the groups that promote them.

14. The CSE released updated cyber advice for Canadian organizations. Is there an elevated cyber risk to Canadians because of the situation in Europe?

- In light of rapidly evolving cyber risks, specifically known Russian-backed cyber threats, the Communications Security Establishment (CSE) recently provided advice to critical Canadian organizations so that they can defend Canadian networks and deter cyber threats before they reach our systems.

- Canadians can rest assured that our country is well-positioned to respond – and is taking the steps needed – to defend our national cybersecurity interests, in line with the steps that our Five Eyes partners are taking.
- We will continue to do whatever it takes to protect Canada and our critical infrastructure.

15. What is your advice to Canadians currently in Ukraine?

- Since February 1, we have been urging Canadians to avoid all travel to Ukraine because of the ongoing Russian threats and the risk of armed conflict.
- On February 11, Minister Joly advised all Canadians in Ukraine to leave the country now, while commercial means are available.
- Our diplomatic and consular staff remain on the ground and stand ready to provide consular assistance to Canadian citizens as required. However, our ability to do so could become severely limited.
- We strongly urge all Canadians in Ukraine to sign up with the Registration of Canadians Abroad service, and to contact sos@international.gc.ca if they are in need of emergency consular assistance.

16. Why did Canada evacuate its embassy in Kyiv? Were CANSOF involved?

- Given the continued deterioration of the security situation caused by the buildup of Russian troops on Ukraine's border, we are moving our operations to a temporary office in Lviv and temporarily suspending operations at our embassy in Kyiv, Ukraine.
- Canada's diplomatic presence and strong engagement in Ukraine will continue. Services for Canadian citizens will also continue to be offered. However, our ability to provide consular assistance could become increasingly limited, and we urge Canadians to leave.
- We will resume operations at the embassy in Kyiv as soon as the security situation in Ukraine allows us to ensure the adequate delivery of services and guarantee the security of our staff.

17. Do you believe that there is a divide within NATO between nations that are more willing to help Ukraine, and others that are less so? Do you believe that Canada falls into either camp?

- NATO allies are united in expressing our deep concern about Russian aggression towards Ukraine, and indicating that there will be severe economic consequences for Russia in the event of a further Russian invasion. We will be further discussing our coordination at the Defence Ministers Meeting this week in Brussels.
- NATO allies are stepping up to contribute to peace and stability in Eastern Europe, including Canada, which leads the enhanced NATO Forward Presence Battle Group in Latvia, and trains Ukraine's security forces under Operation UNIFIER.
- I am engaged directly with NATO Secretary-General Stoltenberg, as well as my ministerial counterparts from individual member states, to coordinate our actions and ensure that our nations are stepping up to provide the supports we are best-placed to provide.

18. Will Canada ^{s.38} with Ukraine?

- This particular issue has not been prioritized by Ukraine during our discussions.
- The package we announced in support of Ukraine includes measures to support ^{s.38}. This increased support will help Ukraine strengthen its security and ability to defend itself against a range of threats.
- We will continue to discuss a range of options with our Ukrainian counterparts and our NATO allies, who are also providing Ukraine with a variety of resources.

19. s.38

-
-
-
-
-

20. Would you meet with your Russian counterpart?

- I recognize that engagement with a range of countries is an integral part of Canada's foreign policy when it advances global security and other Canadian interests.
- Minister Joly has briefly met with Foreign minister Lavrov at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Stockholm last December, where she communicated some of Canada's concerns about the current situation in Ukraine.
- On this matter, we will continue to play our role in the ongoing dialogue with Russia through our multilateral partners, namely NATO and the OSCE and will engage bilaterally with our allies to coordinate deterrence efforts.

21. The U.S. has accused Russia of 'false flag' operations in Ukraine. Do you expect further Russian attempts to destabilize Ukraine?

- Russia has long attempted to destabilize Ukraine through a range of hybrid efforts.
- We are aware of multiple reports of efforts to recruit Ukrainian government officials, increased military support for separatist groups in Ukraine's east, and long running disinformation campaigns aimed at destabilizing the country and creating an environment of fear and uncertainty.
- Most recently, we have seen reports of potential false flag operations.
- We are monitoring the situation and will continue to work closely with our allies to coordinate our responses to deter further Russian aggression.

22. We recently saw the deployment of HMCS Montreal to Europe. Is this due to the escalating situation in and around Ukraine?

- NATO is a cornerstone of Canada's international security policy.
- s.38 in support of NATO assurance and deterrence measures, the CAF is maintaining a frigate in European waters under the NATO flag on a rotational basis.
- This routine deployment of a Royal Canadian Navy ship in support of NATO assurance and deterrence measures provides Canada with the flexibility to execute a range of missions across a broad spectrum of operations in support of the international effort in the region.

(B) CONVOY

23. Why did your government invoke the Emergencies Act?

- I am deeply concerned by the illegal blockades and occupations that are harming communities, endangering jobs, disrupting supply chains, and threatening our economy.
- Occupying streets, harassing people, and breaking the law are not signs of a peaceful protest.
- We are invoking the *Emergencies Act* to supplement Provincial and Territorial authorities to address the blockades and occupation to keep Canadians safe, protect people's jobs, and end illegal obstruction of our infrastructure.

24. Are you concerned about the multiple CAF members alleged to have been involved in the convoys and blockades?

- I am deeply concerned by the illegal blockades and occupations that are harming communities, endangering jobs, disrupting supply chains, and threatening our economy.
- Throughout COVID-19, the Canadian Armed Forces have been there for Canadians. Over ninety-eight percent of Canadian Armed Forces members have attested to being fully vaccinated. They represent the overwhelming majority of our military, and we thank each of them for rolling up their sleeves to protect themselves and their fellow citizens.
- The discipline and good conduct of our Canadian Armed Forces is of the utmost importance, so that all Canadians can have faith in this institution's ability to carry out its mission.
- All members of the CAF must adhere to the Queen's Regulations and Orders, including those that pertain to the public expression of political opinions.
- I expect that any CAF member whose conduct brings discredit to the Forces will be held accountable by their Chain of Command.

25. Are you excluding the possibility of the CAF assisting in clearing the illegal blockades in Ottawa?

- The military is not a police force, and the best solution here is for local, provincial, and federal police forces to work together and do their jobs.
- The use of military for law enforcement operations is an absolute last resort, and we want to avoid that at any cost.

26. Do you believe there is a national security risk posed by foreign funding to the convoy?

- Our intelligence community and law enforcement partners are diligently surveying the convoy's financial support and accusations of foreign funding.
- We support the committee on public safety and national security's decision to call officials from GoFundMe to testify.
- We are aware that GoFundMe has decided to refund the convoy's crowd-funding campaign after further investigation.
We thank our law enforcement partners for their continued efforts and are confident that they will crack down on any unlawful funding.